

James KIRBY

Historians and the Church of England. Religion and Historical Scholarship, 1870-1920

Oxford University Press, Oxford 2016, 272 pp.

At a first glance, one of the main questions that can arise in reader's mind would surely be: what good for a/why a «historiography of historiography»? Because this seems to be the research of James Kirby that aims is to present the relationship between religion and historical scholarship in the English space from 1870 to 1920. A carefully lecture will prove that the book is much more than that, not only the fact that it focuses on the relationship between the Church of England and historical scholarship in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, but also because it uses a huge amount of sources in order to highlight a complex universe and to present the dynamics of an interesting phenomenon.

Segmented into eight big chapters and accompanied by an epilogue, the research starts by presenting in the introductory part (p. 1-19) the relationship between religion and modern knowledge, the one between the Church of England and historical research but also evaluating critically the sources. From the beginning, James Kirby underlines the idea of a learned church is important in the understanding of his approach. He says there, linking it with the challenges of the times from the beginning of his investigation:

«This idea of the Church of England as a learned church provides us with an alternative conceptual framework for understanding the relationship between religion and knowledge in the nineteenth century. It is of course hardly novel to change the notion that the relationship between religion and science in this period was antagonistic. It is now widely appreciated, for instance,

that many Christians quite readily received (and reshaped) the idea of evolution by natural selection» (p. 2).

After showing that the England Church was open to the dialogue with science without agreeing any discover made by the last one, the author presents the Anglican historians (p. 20-40), bringing into attention topics like the «Oxford Movement and its legacy (p. 20-31), but also other relevant aspects, inside the second chapter. «The learned Church» (p. 41-65) is the topic approached in the 3rd chapter. There, he tries to offer a landscape of the aforementioned expression, by emphasizing aspects like the parish or higher clergy that contributed to the dissemination of such a perception regarding the institution.

An interesting and challenging research follows in the 4th chapter, entitled «the nation» (p. 75-104). There, the presentation starts from the relationship between the nationality and religion (the fact that Anglican Church started as a national one being a notorious aspect) and it goes to sensible aspects like the understanding of Anglican belonging in American space or in colonies that started an emancipation movement. Comparing different sources, but also the historical books of the time, the author succeeds in illustrating the complexity of such a problem and in showing how it has been seen in historiographical research. The colonialist and the historical landmarks are later correlated with the constitution (p. 105-131) and seen through the lengths of English constitutionalism.

Later, in the 6th chapter (p. 132-164), the historian presents the topic from the

perspective of the social and economic history. It starts by putting it in the context of the social criticism of the epoch and then, presenting the evolution of different conceptions from authors like Thoo-rold Rogers, Toynbee or Tawney or in the context of religious and social changes like the development of puritanism and rise of capitalism.

The seventh chapter entitled: «The Reformation Settlement» (p. 165-188) speaks about topics like the myths of English Reformation, Anglo-Catholic criticism or different currents like erastians, liberals and evangelicals. It is continued by a thematic unity dedicated to the image of theological topics in the historiographical approaches from the mentioned period (p. 189-215).

Then, the epilogue meant to be a substitute for the conclusions (p. 216-222) brings

again into attention the main aspects presented in the book and underlines the dynamics or the historiographical approach of Church of England between 1870 and 1920.

Using a huge amount of sources and presenting a topic that has not been approached in this way until now and presenting sensitive aspects like the national meaning and its role in understanding the Anglican belonging in the American space from the end of the 19th century, James Kirby offers not only a valuable contribution to the contemporary historiography, but also a book that is useful for any category of reader and it helps him to better understand not only the English history, but also its spirituality.

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Claude LANGLOIS

Les premiers thérésiens: de l'histoire d'une âme (1898) à la canonisation de Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus (1925)

Honoré Champion, Paris 2015, 425 pp.

Claude Langlois, né en 1937 est un historien et sociologue français. Il est spécialiste de l'histoire du catholicisme du XIX^e et XX^e siècle. Il fut professeur à l'Université de Rouen en 1988 puis chercheur au Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. En 1993 il inaugure la première chaire d'histoire et de sociologie du catholicisme contemporain à l'École pratique des hautes études. Il est connu comme spécialiste du « catholicisme au féminin ». Il a fondé avec Régis Debray l'Institut Européen en sciences des religions. Il travaille principalement sur la théologie morale et la spiritualité. Il a de nombreuses publications sur

Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. Il a consacré les vingt dernières années de sa carrière aux écrits de Thérèse de Lisieux. Le présent ouvrage confirme son intérêt pour cette Sainte, d'ailleurs il publie trois ans après celui-ci en 2018 un autre ouvrage qui étudie *l'Histoire d'une âme*, livre autobiographique de Sainte Thérèse.

Le livre comporte quatorze chapitres regroupés en trois parties. Il analysera les lecteurs-commentateurs de *l'Histoire d'une âme*. Il aborde la question du procès ordinaire de la béatification de Thérèse pour achever avec la diffusion et la prolifération du message de Thérèse.